



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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ANACOSTIA RAIL HOLDINGS PRESIDENT DETAILS SHORT LINE NEEDS FOR MODERNIZING AMERICA'S RAIL NETWORK

Peter Gilbertson provides testimony to Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines and Safety's hearing, "On the Right Track: Modernizing America's Rail Network"

WASHINGTON, June 18, 2025 – Today Peter Gilbertson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Anacostia Rail Holdings and member of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association provided testimony detailing the role short line railroads play in the interconnected freight rail network. In his testimony, Gilbertson outlined three initiatives that would enable short lines to remain a critical transportation provider to more than 10,000 customers, and a driver of economic growth in small town and rural areas of the United States.

"Short lines are high-impact businesses in underserved areas. They are job creators, safety multipliers, and sustainability drivers. But to remain viable and competitive, we need reliable, accessible infrastructure funding, with CRISI at its core, a modern regulatory approach rooted in performance, not outdated prescriptions, and the flexibility to innovate, test, and deploy new technologies—safely and efficiently," said Gilbertson.

Short lines face steep economic and regulatory challenges. Most operate on infrastructure that is decades old and must overcome disproportionately high capital costs with limited revenue.

Gilbertson illustrated the transformational impact of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program on Anacostia railroads, and across the short line industry. Since inception, the CRISI grant program has invested over \$2.7 Billion in 240 short

line projects across the nation. This has been matched by \$1.28 Billion from private and non-federal sources. Strengths of the program include the predictability of funding provided through advance appropriations and the merit based approach for awarding projects.

The program could be more powerful if Congress addressed the delays in projects moving from award to obligation and completion – some grant recipients report lags of 18-24 months. Short line projects are relatively uncomplicated. Streamlining implementation and allowing for greater flexibility in project management would ensure that federal dollars translate more quickly and effectively into real-world benefits.

Gilbertson also called for continued federal support of programs that help address safety between railroads and the motoring public (Operation Lifesaver, Section 130, and the Rail Crossing Elimination program), and the Short Line Safety Institute which addresses safety culture on short line railroads.

The short line industry is also urging the Department of Transportation to implement a transformational regulatory approach —the Risk Reduction Program (RRP) Congressional mandate, which would provide the foundation for regulatory reform and innovation.

In his testimony, Gilbertson shared that advances in rail technology are driving safer, more efficient, and more sustainable transportation solutions. From automated track inspection to predictive maintenance and low-emission locomotives, these innovations are not only enhancing operations but also supporting broader national goals— increasing fuel efficiency, driving economic growth, improving safety, and connecting communities.

“Continued investment and regulatory flexibility, particularly in the area of waivers is essential to unlock the full potential of these technologies and ensure that America's rail network remains a global leader in 21st-century transportation,” said Gilbertson.

For a full copy of Gilbertson’s written testimony, click [here](#).

About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation’s 603 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 50,000 route miles of track in 48 states, or approximately 30% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. www.aslrra.org